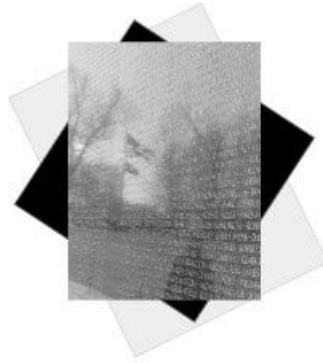


Maya Lin, Architect



To me, the American Dream is being able to follow your own personal calling. To be able to do what you want to do is incredible freedom.

Like many children, Maya Lin loved animals. She would spend hours in the woods behind her house watching animals in their natural habitat. She wondered if she would grow up and become a vet. She also found time to be artistic and creative. Maya would build houses and villages out of paper. She would make items out of clay and silver. Maybe Maya would have a job that would allow her to use these talents.

Maya Lin was born on October 5, 1959 in Athens, Ohio. Both her parents worked at Ohio University. Maya did not have many friends as a child. She enjoyed reading and hiking. In school her best subject was mathematics.

After graduating high school, Maya went to Yale University to major in architecture. Architecture is the art and science of building structures. During her senior year at Yale, the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Fund announced a national design competition to honor the men and women who were killed or missing in action during the Vietnam War. The memorial would be located in Washington D.C. Maya designed

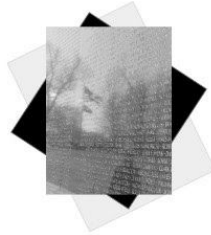
a memorial as a class assignment. She then decided to submit her design in the competition as it was open to all Americans, not just professional architects. Over 1,400 ideas were submitted. Maya was shocked to find out that her idea had won.

The Vietnam Veteran's Memorial was dedicated and opened on November 11, 1982. Over three million people visit this memorial each year to remember and honor the Americans who died or were missing in action during the Vietnam War. The memorial has the names of all the Americans who died or were listed missing in action. These names are engraved in black granite. Visitors are encouraged to touch the engraved names.

Maya Lin went on to graduate school and earned a master's degree. She has continued to create memorials and art installations around the United States. Her memorials and artwork are special. These pieces have changed the way people respond. Instead of just looking, they encourage people to touch and feel. The works allow people to respond and think about the events that they represent.

Name: _____ Date: _____ Period: _____

Maya Lin, Architect



1. Why do you think that Maya Lin was shocked when she won the design competition for the Vietnam War Memorial?

2. How did Maya's childhood prepare her for her career?

3. Why do you think that people are encouraged to touch the names on the memorial?

4. Give an example from the text that supports the statement that Maya Lin is a creative person.
